AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1 – 11. (Cancelled)

12.   (New) A distributed service system, the system comprising:

a register device for conducting a transaction;

a first peripheral device configured to communicate information regarding the transaction according to a first protocol; and

a protocol converter coupled to the register device and the first peripheral device, the protocol converter configured to receive information from the first peripheral device according to the first protocol and communicate the information using TCP/IP; and

a transaction controller coupled to the protocol converter and the register device, the transaction controller operable to facilitate communication between the register device and the protocol converter.

13.   (New) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the register device is a point-of-sale (POS) terminal.

14.   (New) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the first peripheral device comprises a printer.

15.   (New) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the first peripheral device comprises a signature-capture platform.

16.   (New) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the first peripheral device comprises a PIN pad.

17.   (New) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the first peripheral device comprises a scanner.

18.   (New) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the first peripheral device comprises a check reader.

19.   (New) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the first protocol comprises RS485.

20.   (New) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the first protocol comprises RS232.

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11.   (New) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the first protocol comprises USB.

12.   (New) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the first protocol comprises TCP/IP.

13.   (New) A distributed service system according to claim 12, further comprises a second register device coupled to the protocol converter, the protocol converter further configured to communicate information received from the first peripheral device with the second register device.

14.   (New) A distributed service system according to claim 12, further comprising a plurality of peripheral devices coupled to the protocol converter.

15.   (New) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein state information regarding the transaction is stored in the transaction controller and the register device.

16.   (New) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the register device, the transaction controller, and the protocol converter each comprise an Ethernet connection.

17.   (New) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the transaction controller provides Jini services.

18.   (New) A distributed service system according to claim 17, wherein the first peripheral is registered with the Jini services.

19.   (New) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the register device is remotely located from the first peripheral device.

20.   (New) A distributed service system according to claim 12, wherein the transaction controller is remotely located from the first peripheral device.

21.   (New) A method for operating a distributed service system, the method comprising:

    operating a register device for conducting a transaction at a first location;

    operating a first peripheral device configured to communicate information regarding the transaction according to a first protocol; and

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operating a remotely located protocol converter coupled to the register device and the first peripheral device by a TCP/IP communication link, the protocol converter configured to receive information from the first peripheral device according to the first protocol and communicate the information using TCP/IP; and

operating a transaction controller remotely located from said register device and coupled to the protocol converter and the register device, the transaction controller operable to facilitate communication between the register device and the protocol converter.